A

LETTER,

ADDRESSED TO

A GENTLEMAN IN ENGLAND,

CONSIDERING

THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS

AGAINST

AN UNION,

AND DECIDING

IN FAVOUR OF THE MEASURE.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY H. FITZPATRICK, 3, UPPER ORMOND-QUAY.

1799

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

LETTER,

&c. &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

WHEN in compliance with your desire, I offer you my thoughts upon that interesting and important question, which now fills the mind, and agitates the passions of either country, I well know that a preface is unnecessary to win your favor to my opinions, or to disarm your suspicion of my disinterestedness. You know I am completely of, and in Ireland; not merely an Irishman by birth, but by interest and sentiment; of too little importance to be bound by any public connection, and of too great independence to be the mouth-piece for the political prejudices of any party: and you, at least, will do me the justice to acknowledge, that I feel no motive for my present conduct, but a pure and perfect wish to advance the interests of my country.

When I discuss the merits or demerits of an incorporative union of Ireland with England, I proceed with caution; and not without some apprehension, and much reverence, touch this potent talisman of Irish pride and prejudice; and in doing so at this season, I must disobey the mandate of a learned and respectable body*; I must

* The Lawyers; who came to a Resolution, with the dissent of thirty-two, that this was a dangerous and improper season for agitating the question of an Union.

muſt reject that injunction, whoſe reaſon I do not ſee, and therefore whoſe authority I cannot acknowledge. For, if ever there was a period, my friend, that called for the inſtant and immediate adoption of ſome great and deciſive meaſure, to reſtore permanent health and ſtability to the ſhattered ſtate, it is the preſent; when, ſmarting from the effects of our old errors, we are ſtung into the ſenſe of their exiſtence, and of the neceſſity of their removal. Suffer us to relapſe into our former ſtate—to loſe in oblivion our paſt miſeries, diſgraces, and diſhonors, and then forgetting our danger, we forget ourſelves; that powerful impulſe to reform—an inſtant ſenſe of error, once removed, we ſink into old habits—we become confirmed in old vices—we feel no longer the wiſh, and conſequently have no longer the power to renovate, but walk the ſame mad round of folly and of faction, to the ſame gulph of blood. The people at large have had time to breathe from ſlaughter, but not to forget their miſeries; and are now in that temper of mind peculiarly adapted to the diſcuſſion of this important queſtion. They have ſuffered under the affliction of the diſeaſe—they remember its pangs, and they have the prudence to deſire, and the courage to adopt, ſome effectual (and perhaps ſevere) remedy, to relieve it, and prevent its return.

At leaſt, in ſpeaking thus of the diſpoſition of men competent to judge, I form my opinion of it from the feeling of my own at this moment; and therefore ſhall proceed to examine into—firſt, the neceſſity which enforces the eſpouſal of a meaſure, by the country, of ſuch fulneſs and efficiency as the Union; and then, if diſcovering this neceſſity, ſhall look into the practicability

bility of ſuch a change being effected; and ſhall, laſtly, inquire into the general and obvious conſequences, to this country, of an Union; (which however may derive a particular ſhape and colour, from the nature of the conditions on which it ſhall be eſtabliſhed) conſidering, as we advance, the principal arguments which have been urged againſt this meaſure, and reſting the whole upon the broad and ſolid baſis of approved political axioms and hiſtoric facts.

Let us now ſearch into the ſtate of this country with a firm and faithful hand, without reſpect to men or meaſures, but only regarding the health and ſalvation of a wretched country; and from this view, I think, we ſhall retire with a full conviction of the neceſſity of an Union. We now ſtand, with relation to England, in an ineligible and precarious ſituation. Yes; for what is that ſituation?—Two independent kingdoms, ſubject to one Sovereign, yet actuated by ſeparate intereſts, and in conſequence diſturbed by endleſs jealouſies and diſcontents, now lie ſide by ſide; wedded by nature, but divided by art; (for a rivulet of ſea is no line of diſtinction to mar the intention of the former, or to ſupport the latter) greatly unequal in power and riches; and the greater that diſparity, the more manifeſt the partiality which the common Monarch muſt ever, by his duty and inclination, expreſs in favor of the intereſts of the greater, when they claſh with thoſe of the ſmaller nation. Thus, as the uniform experience of that time, ſince firſt we held a rank as a civilized nation, or a conſtitution that bore a name, has evinced, there has been eſtabliſhed, by our preſent faulty ſyſtem of polity, a perpetual fountain of diſcord between the two countries, to infect our happineſs

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and poiſon our proſperity. How then are we to free ourſelves from this unhappy reſult of our ſituation? Could we for a moment tolerate the raſh and romantic project of a final ſeparation from Great-Britain, by the only poſſible means, throwing ourſelves into the arms of the enemies of the human race, to be hugged to death by France? For vain and ſilly is the idea, that by our own independent, unaſſiſted ſtrength, we could ſtruggle with the power of Great-Britain! It is a ſelf-evident truth, which needs no confirmation or ſupport, that a conteſt with the fifter country, unaided by another ſtate, and moſt probably even then, from the irreſiſtible force of her fleets, would end in our utter deſtruction and final annihilation as a free and happy community. And I truſt there are none whom I wiſh to convince, who require the abhorred abſurdity of a connection with France, a bankrupt, a robber, and a murderer, to be inſiſted on; if there are, they muſt apply to another reaſoner for ſatisfaction, for I ſhall have no dealing with the fool or villain who could hope to be reconciled to that union, againſt which all the reaſon, the virtue, and the patriotiſm of the country, have ſo lately and ſo ſucceſsfully contended. If then the connection with England cannot be diſſolved, but by means the moſt mad and wicked; and if the political relation in which we now ſtand with that country is vicious in policy, and has been the cauſe of grievous complaint and contention, riſing to faction, and terminating in blood and ſlaughter, what remains but a final and incorporative Union between the kingdoms, upon terms of reciprocal bounty and benefit? And if we adopt this grand and concluſive meaſure, do we not follow the bright and

faithful

faithful ſtar of hiſtory, which guides us in the way that led other ſtates to permanent peace and felicity? The *incorporating* Union of the kingdoms, included in the Spaniſh monarchy, was ſolid and ſecure; but the *federal* Union of Sweden and Denmark was weak and precarious, the parent of ſtrife, the nurſe of faction, of partial favour and oppreſſion, and it was diſſolved in blood and ſlaughter, and ended in everlaſting ſeparation. Scotland too, taught by long and painful experience, the vice and folly of ſuch a ſituation, tired out by diſcontent and diviſion, and exhauſted by faction, ſurrendered at length with reluctance her darling folly—the ſhadow of independence, to the voice of wiſdom and political prudence. She made a becoming ſacrifice of pride and prejudice, to ſecurity and happineſs,—the great and genuine ends of government. She gave up ſound to ſenſe, name to thing; and thus in future wiſely ſpared the Miniſter the neceſſary and unavoidable expence of bribing a Scottiſh Parliament to carry into effect Engliſh meaſures, and Scotland the ſhame and ſorrow of beholding herſelf deluded and degraded by a mock repreſentation, and a bubble independence.

And what has been the obvious and undeniable conſequence? I refer you to the page of hiſtory to be informed how poor, how ſavage, how illiterate, how depreſſed in exertion, how ſplit into factions, how weak and inconſiderable Scotland was before the Union of the kingdoms, in the reign of Anne; and to the large and living teſtimony of her flouriſhing fields, her ſplendid cities, her expanded commerce, her enlightened and erudite inhabitants, to point out how ſhe has advanced herſelf ſince the Union.

But I know that theſe beneficial effects are denied by ſome, as reſulting from the Union to Scotland; arguing, that ſhe only advanced in

common with the general improvement of other nations, and would have done ſo without ſuch ſpecific advantage. Yet, I maintain, that ſhe never could, from her peculiar ſituation, have participated in ſuch advantages, had not England opened to her the ſources of proſperity, by unfettering and foſtering her commerce; had ſhe not by uniting her with herſelf, loſt her jealouſies, and her power, together with her deſire of depreſſing a growing nation; which ſhe could ſhut out from privilege and profit at all times, with ſo much eaſe and efficacy. For is it not plain to common ſenſe, that other nations, independent, and actuated by the vigour of their own intereſt, unreſtrained by others, muſt riſe in power and riches by the natural gradation of events; but do they, ſo diſſimilar in circumſtance, furniſh an application to Scotland, bound and garbled, and watched with the ever-waking eye of jealouſy by England? Surely not, ſuch an objection has no ground to reſt upon.

It would indeed be matter of ſurprize to me, in reading the Anti-Unionites, to find them perverting hiſtoric fact, and miſtating the ſtrongeſt and the cleareſt evidence, in order to paint the Scottiſh Union in the odious colours of diſgrace and diſadvantage, were I not conſcious that they purſued theſe unwarrantable meaſures, (and thus unwiſely diſcovered what they wiſhed to conceal) fully aware of the potency of that event militating directly againſt all their aſſertions, and therefore wiſhing to hide the fair and open features of that meaſure, beneath a maſk of foulneſs and deformity. But the particular inſtances of this conduct I ſhall defer noticing, until they ariſe in the face of my poſitions, relative to the conſequences of an Union to this country.

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But what application do theſe hiſtorical obſervations provide? This obvious one: that if other nations, placed in a ſimilar ſituation to that in which we now exiſt, felt and confeſſed its folly and vice, and incorporatively united with the greater country, and thus ſecured to themſelves ſafety and happineſs beyond what they knew before; and that if others, as in the caſe of Sweden and Denmark, obſtinately adhered to that ſyſtem of political abſurdity, a fœderal union, and met in conſequence, ſlaughter and ſeparation, debility and inſignificance; —we ſhould feel it ſtrongly incumbent on us to purſue the ſame wiſe and happy ſcheme;—if yet we own a regard for the experience of mankind, if untainted by the mania of modern philoſophy, we hold ourſelves bound by the approved axioms of ages and of political wiſdom?—For what do they ſay?—That one empire, as it has but one ſovereign, ſhould feel but one intereſt, and be guided but by one legiſlature; thus to aboliſh all rivalſhip and jealouſy, which produce but contention and faction in the parts, and debility in the whole; and thus, by extending the connexion between the countries through every particle; conſolidating our jarring and independent kingdoms into one perfect maſs of ſtrength and ſplendour, animated by one principle, and vitally and integrally purſuing one courſe; as we proudly perform the orbit of glory, give to our enemies but hopeleſs envy and tame ſubmiſſion, and ſecure to ourſelves all the energy and glow of the fulleſt fortune.

But with whom do I expect this argument to have weight? With that wiſe man whoſe inceſſant cry it is—with England we muſt ſtand or fall! and, thus convinced, who can, with a clear and ſteady eye, penetrate the glare of Gallic philoſophy, and the blaze of Gallic triumph, and diſcover beneath, de-

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ſign the moſt deſtructive, and vice the moſt ſecurſt; who looks on England as the citadel of defeated and perſecuted mankind, the laſt rallying point for the freedom and independence of the world, and therefore prudently deſires to uphold and aid her power to ſecure his own ſalvation.

And how, let me aſk, can this truly wiſe and patriotic intention be better advanced than by an Union, which preſents us no longer an unecemented, tottering mound againſt the common foe, but one compacted, formidable, invincible bulwark? For what has our former precarious connection with Great-Britain afforded to that foe, but invitation to attack, and well-founded hopes of ſucceſs; which, (were they not confounded by the triumphs of our fleet) had been, if not fatal to this country, at leaſt the cauſes of its deſolation and its miſery? Bitter experience has juſt inſtructed us, that reſcued, as we have been, by an over-ruling Providence from imminent deſtruction, we ſhould adopt the counſel of wiſdom, and inſtantly embrace, moſt cloſely, that very object which our enemies, by their utmoſt exertion, ſought to deprive us of.

Our connection with England, a vigilant and able enemy well knew was a fetter upon their power, and a bar to their ambition. That bond of Union which at preſent exiſts they ſoon diſcerned was too weak to reſtrain domeſtic faction, and too looſely drawn to hold together diſcordant intereſts, againſt the inſidiouſneſs of foreign artifice, and the aſſault of foreign arms. Therefore they attempted, and nearly accompliſhed, the ruin of that connection. Why then ſhould not Ireland ſpeak confuſion to their hopes, and put prevention to their ſchemes, by an inſtant and intimate Union with that country which ſtands pre-eminently honored

nored by their envy and unrelenting hate? Would not such a measure, adopted by the general consent of our country, openly avow to France, how we execrate and are determined to resist her designs:—would it not bring dismay to her heart, and submission from her lips, coming to a distracted world the joyful herald of returning peace?

And where then could our republicans look for the possibility of their desired separation? Bound, as we would be, to England; no longer an appendant limb, but a part of her heart; our native troops, probably, removed and serving in the other country, then one with this kingdom; her forces here affording us security the most perfect, and confidence the most unbounded; her inhabitants, blended with ours, mutually conciliating affection, and disarming prejudice, thus democratic design, deprived of its support within, losing its aid from without, and French intrigue fled, like the pestilence from the purified clamate, leaving health and stability behind.

Is this fiction? Look to Scotland and she will reply:—Where is now her once formidable and turbulent clanship? Where her civil wars, nourished by idleness, furnished by faction, and palliated by penury? Where her French interest and French intrigue, so restless, persevering and pernicious, which flourished during the *federal* union of the kingdoms, from James to Anne, and then perished, on her establishment of the *incorporative*—gone by: memory is now their monument, and history their record. Are we not then convinced, from retrospection of the past, and providence for the future, from the probabilities of reason, and the confirmation of history, of the necessity of this measure being espoused by the country? What infatuation must it be, to wish

to blunder on in the ſame courſe, productive of ſo much faction, rancour and blood, which we have invariably and unavoidably purſued, from our innate vice of ſyſtem, ſince the union of the crowns until the preſent day? Is it not madneſs and folly to remain tamely and meanly wedded to our old error, without feeling energy ſufficient to throw it off? What are the features of our former ſtate of which we are ſo much enamoured that we cannot even wiſh to loſe the witching faſcination? An ugly hag, with deformity in every lineament, now prates of beauty which ſhe never owned, and boaſts of pleaſures which ſhe never knew; and will you credit the tale of her fooliſh vanity? A bold truth muſt be told: it is for the public good. Therefore, (however injurious to the falſe feelings of ſome,) I will act the honeſt, open part of a plain dealing friend; and the more I love my country, the more I deſire its reform;—the freer will I ſpeak of its faults, and the deeper will I probe its vitiated parts, that it may ſee and lament its defects, and ardently embrace the only remedy within its competence. For, will you truſt the treacherous friend who gilds the paſt, to keep you in the ſame courſe of deſtructive deluſion?—Who will tell you, you have been happy in a perpetual ſucceſſion of factions, marked by the treacheries of the day, to enſure the murders of the night?—That your Oak-boys, White-boys, Right-boys and Defenders, have been the emblems of your peace, and the fruit of your proſperity? That Catholic demand and Proteſtant oppoſition, pertinacious and perpetual,—that ſecret ſedition, preying on the vitals, and open rebellion rending the heart of the ſtate, that domeſtic deſolation and foreign invaſion, have been the pleaſures of our ſituation, and the enviable and unrivalled poſſeſſion which we wiſh not to change and cannot part with?

with? Have our Parliaments been ſo purely formed, and purely conducted,—has their independence been ſo proud and perfect, that we would not alter that formation, or ſacrifice that independence? Has there been no argument furniſhed, no ground appropriated to diſcontent and clamour, by the neceſſary influence of the Britiſh Miniſter, ſo widely diſplayed and ſo corruptly ſupported, in theſe paſt Parliaments? And when convinced that this country, governed by its own Legiſlature, diſtinct and independent, or by the incorporative one of three kingdoms, muſt ever be guided and ſwayed by England, ſhould we not fervently deſire to reduce the expenſive ſyſtem of influence, by the only poſſible means—reducing its objects? And by thus prudently cutting off the diſfiguring and debilitating excreſcence of repreſentation, you, by depriving intereſt and corruption of its food, ſpare the finance of the ſtate from public pollution, to ſupply the ſinews of public utility.

Look back then to the paſt, and ſay, can we exult in the contemplation?—Can we, from its review, deſire its continuance,—or can we nobly riſe ſuperior to prejudice and partiality?—Shall we generouſly confeſs our errors and greatly commence reform? That only reform which is within our reach, and which, were others offered, could alone be adopted, at the preſent ſeaſon, with ſafety to the ſtate. God of wiſdom and juſtice! Diſſatisfied with our repreſentation, why cling to it with continuous folly? Groaning under public burthens, why not wiſh to reduce them, by leſſening their application to cheriſh and pamper immorality? Torn by eternal faction, why not bind down the fury, by the invincible reſtraint of ſtrong, *impartial*, *univerſal*, and, therefore, well executed law? Agitated and harraſſed by foreign intrigue,

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and foreign aſſault, why not prevent their future exertion by the wiſdom and power of internal regulation? Eſcaped as we have, from the imminence of death and political diſſolution, why not inſtantly embrace that remedy moſt naturally and efficaciouſly adapted to prevent the diſtemper? And therefore, do we not diſcover the imperious neceſſity, urged by every prudent conſideration, of effecting a radical, yet conſtitutional change, which an Union muſt acompliſh.——With what advantages to this country, a conſideration of its conſequences ſhall preſently point out.

Permit me now to advert to the practicability of effecting this great alteration in the State. When I ſpeak of this practicability, I of courſe mean—the legal and conſtitutional one, ſuch as patriots may adviſe, and an honeſt adminiſtration may execute. I know that many raiſe a difficulty reſpecting the competency of Parliament to eſtabliſh this change of themſelves, otherwiſe I ſhould be the laſt, by replying to ſuch an objection, to ſuppoſe the poſſibility of its exiſtence. Now I aſk, if you deny the power of Parliament to alter the Conſtitution of the State, do you not err againſt the ſettled axioms of the wiſeſt and the greateſt Legiſlators, who lay it down as the height of political abſurdity not to ſuppoſe a ſupreme and omnipotent authority, reſident and conſtituted ſomewhere in the State, with all the power of reform? Elſe you leave us in this wretched and deplorable dilemma, either chained down to old errors, and rivetted in old vices, without poſſeſſing the means of reſtitution and reform, or elſe compelled to have recourſe to the laſt, and moſt deſperate remedy, an appeal to the people; which diſſolves all forms, ſuperſedes all law, and reduces men to a ſtate of nature, left again to unaſſiſted

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reaſon and unregulated paſſion. If you diſlike and deſpiſe this abſurd and wretched ſituation, you muſt admit an omnipotent authority in the State, and where in the State, unleſs reſiding among the Three Eſtates of Parliament? This is the dictate of reaſon, reſting on the ſtrong and proud ſupport of legal and conſtitutional learning, declared by a Blackſtone and a Mansfield. And indeed it is the ſilent and unwritten, yet clear and certain, characteriſtic of the Conſtitution—to feel and to expreſs by its actions, this paramount and ſuperſeding authority of Parliament; and when accuſed of novelty in her motions, by ſtarting from the preſcribed ſphere of precedent, ſhe always replies from her throne, with the dignity of truth and reaſon,

"Res dura, et regni novitas, me talia cogunt moliri."

Thus ſhe happily exerted herſelf in a moſt potent and unuſual way, in the great revolution of 1688, to which we owe our exiſtence as a free people. And if then a Parliament could, mutilated by the want of its head, bring about a change of that magnitude, unoppoſed by a murmur that could be heard, why ſhould not our *perfect* Parliament be acknowledged competent to aboliſh one name, and continue the ſubſtance, under another? If the Britiſh Parliament could in 1716, prolong its exiſtence, why cannot the Iriſh Parliament in 1799, regulate and alter its own? If the Scotiſh Parliament could diſpoſe of the fate of Scotland, without a doubt advanced, even by the enemies of the Union, reſpecting the ſufficiency of that Parliament to perform that act, what faſtidiouſneſs and faction is it in us to doubt of the competency of our Legiſlature, (with ſuch eſtabliſhed, conſtitutional precedents before us,) to act in a ſimilar manner in a ſimilar ſituation?

Mr. Gould I know laughs at the precedents, and derides theſe authorities; but intemperate aſſertion, unſupported by proof, ſhall never ſubvert the ſtrong, clear and acknowledged evidences of the power of the Parliament, which is the ſpirit of the conſtitution. The roar of deriſion, and the confidence of aſſertion, have long been urged, inſtead of argument, againſt every thing ſanctioned by authority, and conſecrated by the vote of time; but they have failed againſt the Engliſh conſtitution, and the futility of ſuch attempts ſhould caution prudence againſt their renewal.

And where is the reaſon to ſupport ſuch captious exceptions? What body of men in the community can we more ſafely rely upon in ſuch an emergency, than that whoſe ſtake, and therefore whoſe intereſt in the country is much the greateſt? Muſt not they whoſe ſituations are the higheſt, be poſſeſſed the moſt with a ſenſe of, and regard for the dignity, the honeſt pride, the juſt privileges, and advantages of that country from which they derive all their conſequence in life, and the diminution of whoſe rank and benefit muſt invariably be attended by that of their own? Muſt not they who command the moſt leiſure and beſt opportunities for reſearch, be the moſt competent to form a clear and perfect view of the ſubject, and who are impelled to it by their duty and their intereſt? And therefore, whom can we, upon every principle of prudence, look up to with confidence more properly, as the guardians of Iriſh honor and advantage, than the Iriſh Parliament, at this critical moment?

I know it has been inſinuated, by a ſtatement of a ſuppoſed fact which took place in Scotland, to enſure the deſired incorporation of the two countries, that our Parliament may be wrought upon

upon, by corrupt influence, to bring about the meaſure; and that Ireland ſhould not therefore rely with ſatisfaction upon the conviction of the majority of that aſſembly. But odious and inſidious as is the ſuppoſition, that, at ſo *ſacred* a moment, the *majority* of the firſt and moſt enlightened men in the community ſhould meanly barter their country and themſelves; ſhould ſell for a little gold, their ineſtimable honor, and their deareſt intereſts; yet I doubt much if the conditions were not clearly beneficial to the country, if they would, unwiſely, brave, however ſtrong in purſe, the juſt indignation of an incenſed and injured nation. And I think the only proof of this ſhameleſs corruption in the Scottiſh Parliament, adduced by a * writer againſt the Union, is in itſelf a refutation of the alledged fact. For Lord Godolphin's demand from Queen Anne, of 20,000l. to bribe the great opponents of an Union to compliance, could never, from the inſignificance of the ſum, have an influence upon the *majority*; and only proves, (what alas! we have too long, and too certainly known,) that a few baſe ſpirits will ever pollute by their preſence the ſeat of honor and power.

But however, I imagine that the moſt ſcrupulous of conſcience, in politics, muſt loſe their doubts of the competency of Parliament in this inſtance, if the voice of its conſtituents (as it ſhould be in queſtions of moment) is attended to as a general guide of its conduct; that voice may legally ſpeak out from the freeholders of the country, in general petitions to Parliament, or particular inſtructions to repreſentatives. And if one remains unſatisfied with theſe ſecurities, from reaſon, and theſe authorities from hiſtory, for the conſtitutional competency of the Legiſlature,

* Mr Weld.

ture, furniſhed, in the manner I have expreſſed, with the ſentiments of the people, I can form but a poor idea of his wiſdom or moderation. He muſt be or a ſcrupulous bigot, or a dangerous enthuſiaſt in politics.

Of the probable practicability of this meaſure, from the general concurrence of the reſpectability and property of the country, (whoſe opinion only can be conſidered of repute,) we ſhall be more capable of judging, from a fair, and impartial view of the conſequences which muſt reſult from ſuch an Union of power, of privilege, and profit, as England ſhould offer, or Ireland would accept; and which alone can be ſuppoſed to regulate the opinion of the informed and well-judging part of the community, as it is the only rational foundation of aſſent or diſſent.

But before I enter upon this province of enquiry, ſuffer me to deplore the violence and malignity of party, which would ſuppoſe the practicability of an Union, by the odious exertion of force; which would brand the voluntary and generous ſervices of the militia of England, to reſcue us from the talons of a domeſtic dæmon, and to bid us defy the giant of France, as the mean tools of an inſidious policy to ſubvert our independence. Did they arrive in our land when bleſſed with ſecurity and conqueſt; or when torn within, and invaded from without? Did they come when the danger was paſt, to create a new one to our Conſtitution; or to face that danger, and to ſecure that Conſtitution, by the defeat and deſtruction of the enemy? Is our memory ſo ſhort, becauſe our gratitude is ſo cold, as to leave a doubt reſpecting the conduct of the Engliſh militia? Did they not riſk their lives to enſure to us what alone can make ours worth poſſeſſion? Did they not leave their country to protect our own? Did they

they not gallantly refuſe to wait for a more remote, and leſs dangerous invaſion, upon their own ſhores, that they might fly to oppoſe and confound a more formidable, and nearer one, upon ours? Did they then come to effect an Union?

But do they not now remain to carry it into execution? No, while the Breſt fleet remains to carry aſſault to our coaſts, and ſullen ſubmiſſion, and lingering rebellion to welcome it in our boſom; there is no ſafety for Ireland, but in the ſober order, the firm loyalty, and faithful courage of Engliſh ſoldiery. But enough for this weak and wicked calumny.

We now ſuppoſe an Union eſtabliſhed between Great-Britain and Ireland, upon terms of reciprocal amity and advantage. Let me enquire into the conſequences. But what avail, ſay the opponents of an Union, the terms upon which it is formed? They may be advantageous, or they may not, it is of little moment which; for where is our guaranties for the conditions? Thus at the very outſet do they endeavour, (with what propriety we ſhall ſoon diſcover,) to undermine and ſap the only foundation of the projected meaſure, the national honor and the national faith of the honeſteſt, the greateſt, and therefore the proudeſt nation that the ſun viſits in his courſe. They wiſh us to doubt that honor, and to miſtruſt that faith, without an iota of title to the odious inſinuation. For what is the ground upon which it reſts? One alledged breach of one article of the Union between England and Scotland, in the long ſpace of a century. The time of which ſuppoſed fact, its anxious recorders are by no means agreed in: one writer * ſtating it to have occurred ſix years after the eſtabliſhment of the Union, † the other in the ſhorter ſpace of three. But permit me to enquire into this reputed violation

* Mr. Spencer. † Mr. Weld.

tion, and we ſhall ſoon diſcover the juſt eſtimate of Engliſh faith, and the value of its calumniators. There were five-and-twenty articles of union agreed upon and ratified between the countries, but of theſe only *two* were declared to be, for ever, *fundamental* and *eſſential* articles; namely one, 5th of Anne, c. 8, for the eſtabliſhment and perpetuity of the church of Ireland, and the other 5th of Anne, c. 6, for the eſtabliſhment and perpetuity of the church of England there, in Ireland, Wales, and Berwick upon Tweed; and the violation of theſe alone could endanger the Union. But the reſt, not being declared fundamental and eſſential articles, were wiſely left at the diſpoſal of poſterity, when a ſtrong neceſſity might call for their alteration; that both countries might not be abandoned to that hopeleſs ſtate of political abſurdity, devoid of a power veſted ſomewhere, to change and reform their laws. Among theſe poſitively preſcribed conditions, yet alterable by the Britiſh Senate, might the regulation of the Malt Tax have been ranked, altho' its native inſignificance has precluded it from notice in any detail of the articles of Union which has met my eyes. Whatever, from what I have ſtated, we certainly can diſcover no ſemblance of a breach of national faith in England. And the ſtrict and rigid obſervance of the leaſt important articles of that incorporation by that country, for nearly a century, without a ſingle inſtance, (except that contemptible one ſo much inſiſted on,) of an exertion of the national power of alteration, conformably to the nature of circumſtances, expreſsly reſerved to the Britiſh Parliament by the conditions themſelves, while it places the honor of England too high for the reach of calumny, affords at the ſame time to Ireland the ſtrongeſt invitation to confidence, and the

firmeſt

firmeſt ſecurity for truſt. Thus, my friend, we find from hiſtoric obſervation, how the native ray of Engliſh fidelity will ever, by its own energy, relieve itſelf from the obſcuring miſts which its very glow and brilliancy call up, from the ſtagnation of envy.

But how would an Union effect the Legiſlation of this country? I take up the ſuppoſition of the oppoſite ſide, and argue upon it. I aſſume it that we ſend but 100 Members to the Commons Houſe of Parliament. And will that be an injury, or a benefit, to this country? In my mind it is much to be deſired that men the moſt independent in ſituation ſhould alone be returned to ſerve in the Repreſentative. For they are raiſed ſuperior to temptation, and to the meanneſs of ſubſervieney to miniſterial influence, or to greedy and intereſted oppoſition, by the exaltation of their proud fortune. Happy in that country from which they derive all their ſplendor, they muſt revere its intereſts, and feel no motive for their conduct but that great and generous ambition which would ſoar to the heights of power upon the full-ſpread glories of their country.

And let me aſk, can this nation produce a more extenſive independence, of that ſuperiority which I commend for its conſequences, than what one hundred gentlemen can boaſt of? Such, of courſe, I mean, as are unadorned by titles. Certainly not. Therefore, to ſpare the frailty of human nature the ſhame of ſucceſsful temptation, and the country the miſery of a corrupt repreſentation, I would wiſh upon every principle of morality and ſound policy, that the number might not be greater than the independence of the members; that virtue, ſupported and ſecured by fortune, might alone fill the legiſlative benches; that thus the *patriot* petitioner for place, the popular, the *diſintereſted* ſpeech-broker, the

hawk

hawk that hovers round the treasury, and the vulture that would prey upon the offals of place, might no more feed and flourish upon the public corruption; but that in the loss of their profligate hopes and traffic, sedition might lose the power of branding the whole with the crime of a part; of holding up to our disgust a system, as thoroughly polluted, which is only somewhere tainted by the vice of a few; and declaiming with success against the infamy and burthen of supporting and gilding an ugly idol, to cheat the public of its worship, the nation of its interest, and the Parliament of its honor. For certainly, as men of superior fortune must ever be selected, from their influence, the first to fill the House of Representatives, none can find an entrance there till they have passed on to the seat of honor, and when they have, I would close the door against the greedy crowd that clamours for admittance; I would appoint one hundred independent men the guardians of Irish purse and privilege.

But do I say this, because I suspect, that of the late Commons Houses of Parliament, one hundred only loved and pursued the interests of their country. God forbid? But I affirm, that not more than one hundred men of that House have been, or can be, possessed of that independent estate which may place them above the suspicion of sinister motives for their public conduct; and which therefore must disarm calumny of its shaft, and disaffection of its plea, and exalt the lustre of parliamentary character, unclouded by reproach, to shed its happy influence over the country, and guide the vessel of the state with a clear, bright, and unerring ray.

But we are told, that such a comparatively small representation can never support or secure the interests of Ireland, in an united Parliament, where the majority must ever be in favor of

England

England, when the intereſts of the former ſhould claſh with thoſe of the latter. To this I reply, that independent of the conſideration that when united we ſhall feel that integrity and identity of intereſt, which ſhall almoſt preclude the poſſibility of an oppoſition in that reſpect, (which we now frequently and neceſſarily experience, from our independent and ſeparate ſituations, which introduce independent and ſeparate concerns) yet we can overturn this objection with facility, by eſtabliſhing the ſame ſecurity for our intereſts in our articles of compact, that the Scot did, for the ſame purpoſe, in his; by expreſsly declaring, "that laws relating to public policy are alterable at the diſcretion of Parliament; but that laws relating to private right, are alterable only for the evident utility of the people of Ireland*."

And ſhould *we* not reſt contented with a ſimilar ſecurity to that which has enſured to Scotland for a century, without a ſingle effort on the part of England to deſtroy it, progreſſive proſperity and happy contentment? And have we not this additional guarantee, (ſure and ſtrong,) for the regard of the United Parliaments to our wiſhes and votes, that in any purpoſed contempt of the articles of Iriſh Union, or the dictates of Iriſh intereſt, Scotland muſt take the alarm at the deſtined blow, as an indirect aim at herſelf? For is it to be imagined that if Scotland, guided by the plaineſt maxims of the plaineſt prudence, ſaw the rights of United Ireland wronged, ſhe would not rouſe at the kindred danger, and defend in wiſe anticipation, the rights of united Scotland? And the repreſentative numbers of theſe nations, leagued with the eternal Engliſh oppoſition, would preſent a phalanx againſt encroachment, that no miniſter would have the folly to provoke, or the temerity to combat.

But

But why do we hear of the advantages of a *present* Parliament, to curb upon the ſpot, abuſes and dangers as they ariſe? This I deem an argument that applies only to the ſituation of the executive power; a power, whoſe actions, particularly in preſſing emergencies, muſt be inſtant and deciſive, to ſtrike at the evil as it ſprings; but I cannot comprehend its force when brought to bear upon the moderate diſtance of the Legiſlature from the ſcene of its authority: for that aſſembly is, or ought to be, deliberative and not ſuddenly deciſive; and therefore I conceive the intereſts of the country for which it legiſlates, in turbulent ſeaſons, (the ſuppoſition of which, in future, is the ground of my opponent's argument) would be better conſulted by its moderate diſtance than its actual preſence, in as much as, in the former caſe, that calm and mature deliberation, which ſhould ever be the diſtinguiſhing feature of legiſlation, is more ſecure than in the latter, by its removal from the immediate influence of party heat, of prejudice and paſſion, (the deadly enemies of wiſdom,) which in proportion as they rage among the people are felt by the Parliament, a part of that people. And, when thus removed, we ſhould find our legiſlature happily enacting the cool wiſdom of unbiaſſed men, by their ſituation acquainted with, and by their inclination attached to, the intereſts of our country. Then the ſupreme dignity of Legiſlation could not be beat down to a mean ſubſerviency to a particular party, to enact a particular job. Then its awful code could not be diſgraced by raſh and partial deciſions, the reſult of inſtant fear and favour; or ſtained by violent and impolitic ordinances, the effect of immediate rage and revenge. And would not a denial of the poſition, that in turbulent ſeaſons deliberation to enact a remedy

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and preventative, could not be better enfured at a diſtance from, than in the preſence of diſturbance. It is an aſſertion, that the captain could not better enable his veſſel to ride out the tempeſt in port, remote from the full fury of the ocean, than when toſt in the very center of its devouring billows.

I imagine alſo, in the alteration of our legiſlature, which would neceſſarily follow the Union, that I ſhould not feel a ſullitary ſatisfaction in the fall of borough intereſt. I ſhould not, myſelf, (nor would I expect to ſee others,) weep over the amputation of this long withered limb of repreſentation, born, though it was with our conſtitution, and once its beſt ſupport; becauſe the intemperance of power has unſtrung its nerve, exhauſted its ſpirit, and corruption has filled and polluted its ſibres. Let it go then. Let health and vigour be reſtored to our Parliament. Let us, by this neceſſary incorporation, inſure to ourſelves the ſame ſecurity for reform, which the Parliament of England poſſeſſes; and which, as we now ſtand, we cannot hope to obtain until that aſſembly has commenced the great undertaking, if even then the leſſer could expect to poſſeſs a ſimilar advantage in a ſimilar degree with the greater country. Let us wiſely prevent, by an union of our legiſlatures, the eventual and eternal ſeparation of the two countries, which, under the preſent conſtitution of our Parliament, may probably occur, while it holds the power of appointing a Regent, diſtinct and independent, for Ireland, and ſubordinate to England. And let us thus, in fine, by giving unity of exiſtence, of intereſt and action to our Parliaments, conſult and advance the general welfare of the empire, and the particular intereſts of Ireland.

Suffer

Suffer me now to advert to the evident effects of an Union upon the commerce of this country. And here indeed I feel myself redundantly strong. Here it is that I find so vast and beautiful a prospect opened to my admiration, of infinite and varied advantage to my country, that I derive delight from the contemplation of the possibility of its being realized. Must I wish for the persuasion of a Tully, or the rapid conviction of a Demosthenes, to teach her her best interest, and rouse her to embrace it? Broad and glaring tho' that interest, must I yet elucidate and exhibit it? Yes; for such is the blindness of prejudice. Ireland then must know that her commerce, tho' great and extended, is yet, *comparatively*, cramped and little, narrowed and fettered by impediment; that every privilege she could hope to obtain, by the means furnished to her by her present situation, is now within her possession, and that she has yet much commercial benefit to desire; but to desire in vain, unless advanced beyond the reach of mercantile jealousy and restraint, by an equal participation of privilege and profit, with the English trader. The discouragement of Irish manufacture in England, the restraint upon Irish imports into that country, can never be abandoned by her, unless purchased by some equivalent made to her by the policy of Ireland, for the injury of her commerce. Small indeed, that equivalent, and low that purchase, which is to be paid out of the ideal fund of pride in the paper of independence! When I speak thus of pride, let me not be misunderstood. That noble pride, which aspires upon the substantial and polished pedestal of honor, is the first ornament and best pillar of the state; the constitution

tution rifes round it, and the great dome of lofty independence refts fecurely upon it. *Procul profani!* Every tongue fhould honor it, and every hand fupport it. But there is a pride, the fallacious fhadow of the former. A pride that glitters without gold, that fwells without ftrength, and that blufters without dignity. Not like the firft, the high and generous aflertor of injured virtue, but the fretful advocate of coquettifh pique. The former no bribe fhould out-buy, no conditions fhould feduce us to furrender; the latter we fhould fpring at every opportunity of throwing off the fufpicion of poffeffing.

But whatever pride we feel, fay my opponents, fince we have advanced in profperity, the evident fruit of our commerce, fhould we not reft contented with it? Do we not find it great—why then yield all to win a chance of its becoming greater? And fhall we then ftint ourfelves within the prefent limits of our commerce, without the means of ftretching it beyond? What could be done to unfhackle trade, has been atchieved by us. Much of reftraint and difcouragement remains yet to be removed; but never can be removed, except by the expreſs allowance of England. And manifold muft be the golden ftreams that would flow into this country from that rich fource, put within our poffeffion, which has long been a monopoly in the hands of the fifter country. The removal of reftraints from our exports, to the great mart which fhe affords, and the conſequent encouragement of our manufactures, would accompliſh this. May we not ſtipulate too for a privilege to ſhare in the ſplendid emoluments of the trade extended to thoſe foreign countries, whoſe wealth is now the excluſive and apportioned profit of jealous and particular poſſeſſion? But are theſe ſuppoſed advantages

vantages only? No. You have juſt informed me, of what I long expected to come to paſs, that the great merchants of the trading towns of reputation in England, of London, of Briſtol, and Liverpool, were much averſe to the projected Union, and preparing to petition and remonſtrate againſt it in the ſtrongeſt manner. And why? Becauſe deeply verſed in the ſcience of wealth, the Engliſh merchant knows all its cauſes, and feels all its conſequences, and therefore dreads its diminution by its participation. Commerce he has long woo'd with patient aſſiduity, and poſſeſſed at laſt without a rival. He has long revelled in the excluſive property of her ſplendid charms, and ſhrinks from the idea of her becoming common. And will you not accept the teſtimony of men ſo well acquainted with, and ſo attached to their intereſt? Or can I diſcover a ſtronger proof of the commercial benefits, derivable from an Union to this country, than that very teſtimony given againſt it on the other ſide? Surely not; their averſion ſhould be our affection.

But we have a ſecurity for the denial of theſe imagined benefits. We have the ſolid baſis of ſound information and patriot integrity to reſt upon, when we war againſt the idea of mercantile advantage, to be derived from an Union by the nation. The Corporation of Dublin have come forward in their commercial capacity, (for in what other can their opinion be ſuppoſed to have weight as a body) and remonſtrated. Do they pit their authority againſt the glaring reaſon of the thing, and the firſt commercial opinion; and leave, in conſequence, Ireland impreſſed with a deep ſenſe of their wiſdom? Or do they generouſly ſacrifice to the public welfare their evident and individual intereſt, and call forth from

from their country the warmeſt effuſions of gratitude and admiration? Yes, certainly, worthy citizens! We ſhould crown you with the meed of wiſdom and patriotiſm. For, ſeated in the reſidence of Parliament, and conſequently of power, of opulence and faſhion, you poſſeſs at preſent, a portion of artificial, hot-bed commerce, which the ſhallow, and unſheltered waters of your miſerable Bay, opening out of a narrow, long and tempeſtuous channel, nature never deſtined to float to your wharfs and warehouſes; and which an Union, by removing the ſeat of Parliament, might poſſibly diminiſh; as it would naturally ſpread to the true ſeats of commerce, Cork, Waterford, and Belfaſt, all its beſt benefits. Therefore, you have come forward, and *patriotically* remonſtrated againſt the general welfare of your country, to ſave your private and peculiar intereſts, and therefore ſhall you be deified in the temple of national honor.

But, we have been told, we want not theſe commercial benefits. We are rich, we are flouriſhing, and we are contented. Miſtaken men! We feel, we deplore the greateſt of all wants, which extended commerce can alone ſupply; we beg, we ſupplicate, the greateſt of all bleſſings which extended commerce can alone beſtow,—Civilization. Do we with juſtice boaſt of our trade and our manufactures, when we ſearch in vain thro' the land for their never-failing concomitants, Induſtry and Exertion, Competency and Comfort, Order and Tranquillity? Where is the ſmiling cottage of the peaſant, whoſe labours are cheered and cheriſhed by that commerce, whoſe demands muſt be ſupplied by the culture of the land; as the exchange of the one can only be derived from the produce of the other;

whoſe

whoſe increaſe, therefore, is the increaſe of agriculture, and conſequently of the induſtry, the profit, and the welfare of the ruſtic? Where is the neat, the orderly, and comfortable roof of the lowly mechanic, ſupported by that conſtant aſſiduity in work, which the conſtant want of labour, felt by the activity of vigorous commerce, demands? Where are the decent habits of ſobriety and order, attendant continually on unabated induſtry, which the fullneſs of trade can alone ſpread univerſally thro' the vaſt wild of the people? For, tho' ſomewhere the peaſant and mechanic of this country may be found ſurrounded with the appearance of comfort, yet no where, ſcarcely, is he furniſhed with that perpetual employment, which can alone ſpeak the excellence of commerce, or ſecure to the lower orders their morals or their happineſs.

Somewhere, we can diſcover it is true, the beautiful fertility which paſſing commerce has created; but ſhe has been partial in her viſits. Where Great Britain ſmoothed her way by colonization, ſhe has ſtopped and diffuſed her bounties. The North, thus prepared, has cultivated her acquaintance, and has benefited. Cork, Waterford, and Dublin, thus prepared, have cultivated her acquaintance, and have benefited. But there ſhe has confined herſelf, and there ſhe muſt remain; her influence muſt be partial, and her benefits comparatively ſmall, until the baneful ſway of potent and depreſſing jealouſy is removed, by an identity of intereſt and exiſtence with England; until ſhe opens her markets to our manufactures, and divides with us the monopolies of trade; until political are added to our natural advantages, in that degree, which may tempt over the ſuperfluous arts, induſtry, and inhabitants of the

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fifter country, to this,—fo inviting to fettlers, and fo adapted to commerce; were our eſtabliſhment leſſened, our enterprize diſcouraged, and the large gifts of nature no longer perverted by the narrow policy of laws.

Indulge me a moment in the contemplation of the multiplied benefit that would ſpring into this country in the event of an incorporation of commerce. Invited by the ſpontaneous and almoſt unbounded fertility of the ſoil, allured by the comparative cheapneſs of living and of labour, and confiding in the firm eſtabliſhment of the ſtate, which would curb licentiouſneſs, and ſubdue the fiery temper of faction, the thronged and ſuper-abundant labour of England would naturally ſeek a diſcharge ment in the new world of Ireland, before hidden from their view, by the ſyſtem of policy. Without heſitation, then, they would endeavour to enrich an integral and vital part of the empire, which they regarded before with jealouſy and diſlike, as a diſtinct and independent ſtate, whoſe welfare might be their injury, whoſe increaſe their diminution; as the further it advanced in proſperity the more it departed from connection; and might, eventually, loſing its own ſtrength and conſequence, (as has but too frequently been evinced of late,) burſt away, and impetuouſly hurry on to total and final ſeparation. Theſe fears (by no means viſionary and naturally ariſing from a vice and folly of ſyſtem) would be loſt in the [illegible] and the bleſſed, the [illegible] Engliſhmen would [illegible] example to nations, [illegible] ther of Ireland. [illegible] merce would ſpread [illegible] mafs of the community, call forth the induſtry

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and almost unknown tribes of the land, impel the current, and make the smooth face of the ocean to industry and exertion; not an element inactive to serve and to cherish the seeds of vice, of folitude, of slaughter, and desolation; and exertion to reap and lay up their fruit—misery, want and woe, horror and pollution; but to endure to themselves the rich and happy possession of comfort and content, education and morals, harmony and affection.

Is this the romance of my wishes—but a fair Milesian fable? I refer you to the full and ample answer of the world. In her broad and faithful page you may read the history of Commerce. She was the spirit of peace that ferried the dark and troubled waters of the earth. She rose in the East, and dispersed light and life through a dead and darksome world. She connected disparted and hostile mankind; gave them science to quicken, and knowledge to enlarge their mind; and art to embellish and secure society, with morals to form at once its base and its capital. The tender parent of freedom, she bore about the persecuted infant in her arms, until the power of feudal tyranny relaxing at her presence, she won from half-unwilling despotism the charter for the industry and enterprise of man; and thus called into [illegible] this sacred charter, written in glowing characters upon the soul, whose privilege it [illegible]. And this was the prerogative of her son, that freedom, which from the throne she seated in the mind, and which breathing in the temple of the unlawful heart. Thus, commerce elevated an Athens to the perfection of glory; and thus, in modern times, gave the establishment of Venice,

nion, and the independent republics of Italy, did the attainment of certain freedom, power and fame upon Holland, and to settle England in the fulness of strength, the beauty of civilization, the perfection of practical liberty, the glory of arms, and the pride of virtue. And shall we not accept, with joy, the offer of her residence among us, held out by an Union?

But will the most pertinacious deny the benefits to be derived to this country from an identity of commercial privilege with England? (not satisfied with the arguments adduced before to point them out) when they are confirmed, and placed beyond question by the full, fair, and living testimony of Scotland? For I must insist upon the propriety of the application of the fate of that country to point out the probable consequences to this, resulting from a similar situation; as it is evident, (independent of what I stated in the beginning of my letter to establish it,) that the present fortune which Scotland exults in, must principally, if not entirely, have flowed from the Union. As she, so inferior in natural gifts, curled with barrenness, and covered with the rocks and tempests of the North, has yet left mild, fertile, superabundant Ireland behind in civilization; as her universal education, industry, and superior trade, (considering the comparative extent and incapacities of her country) as her profound tranquillity, and happy contentment, too clearly evince. And how are we to account for this strange disparity between Scotland, wronged and neglected by nature, and Ireland her largest favourite? To what are we to attribute the advantages possessed by the former above the latter, but to her

happy establishment, nor factious from its vice, nor weak and insecure from its folly? No more than of the folly and obstinate opposition to truth.

But to return to the confirmation of history, for the allusion of the mercantile advantage and consequent civilization, to be attained by this nation in the event of an incorporation. Scotland, then, in the middle of the reign of Anne, possessed not the name of commerce, and was wholly unacquainted with the substance; and now exults in the enjoyments of the blessings she confers: If her inhabitants, then, were divided into hostile clans, and consequently into warring factions; and are now blended into one social, unanimous community, whose characteristic is order, and whose peculiar fortune is tranquillity: If her barrenness was then her character, and her poverty a proverb; and if now art has triumphed over nature, planted fertility on a sterile rock, and wealth is filling the abode of penury: If barbarism was then her reproach, and ignorance her shame; and now civilization is her praise and learning her peculiar glory: If her cities then were mean and miserable, if Glasgow was then a village, and Edinburgh known only by its palace; and if now commerce has exalted a village into the flourishing city of Glasgow, and has added the beautiful new to the old town of Edinburgh; If her inhabitants, then, loosely scattered over plains and mountains could be counted by the traveller, were they not compelled to shun society and straggle wide, to ensure to themselves a wild and scanty subsistence; and now fill the splendid walls of flourishing cities with

with abundant population: Shall we not, excited by so home and potent an example, which points out that as the commerce, gifted by England, as a return for the Union, to Scotland, advanced through that country, prosperity followed and dwelt in her footsteps, nourishing with all the advantages, and delighting with all the sweetnesses of polished life; shall we not, I say, grasp at that proffered commerce with avidity? And most particularly so, when viewing such rich and liberal effects in the remote situation, the stormy frieghts and unfruitful soil of Scotland, we should be led to expect such bounteous consequences from similar privileges to Ireland, favoured even to England in natural advantages? To the liberal, the patriotic friend of my country, I address this plain and obvious argument, supported throughout by the faithful testimony of history, and without apprehension for its fate, to his candour and judgment I commit it.

But we are daunted with the dread of insupportable burthens, we are to be plunged into the gulph of bankruptcy, and groan beneath the weight of English contribution to the state, when incorporated. And do these consequences follow of course? Can no mitigation be obtained by condition, or can no quota proportioned to our ability be fixed by article? Is it within reason to assert that poor, indolent, wretched and desolated Ireland, could contribute an equal portion to the expence, with rich, industrious, happy and abundant England? That the pigmy should support the shield and wear the helmet of the giant? Is it conformable to policy to say, that a nation which is to be won over and conciliated to a change, should be at the very outset flung into indignant resistance, by the grievous

one accumulation of intolerable burthens? That the man you invite to [illegible] and [illegible] yes on the [illegible] plunder and beggar, [illegible] his [illegible] And let me ask, could such an [illegible] must be [illegible] by candour or information [illegible] the Union, when the tongues of Scotland [illegible] it with [illegible] execration of ignorance or [illegible] ourselves [illegible] as not [illegible] [illegible] with an [illegible] incorporation of tax with England. It was [illegible] and articles of [illegible] as set to in Scotland [illegible] pay but half the [illegible] the [illegible] does in [illegible] us [illegible] that bloody [illegible] burthen [illegible] and it in vain. I cannot [illegible] it [illegible] and can only hope to [illegible] brain of its [illegible]

And [illegible] dreading that the load of [illegible] would be more [illegible] even [illegible] now; for that Union must, as I have shewn before, spread commerce through the land; and as it furnishes the means of the state with all the riches and vigour of life, it must enable the individual to bear that burthen, even increased, with cheerfulness and content; which is now the subject of grievous complaint and heavy apprehension.

Indulge me yet a little, my friend while I remark upon that consequence of the incorporation of the kingdoms, which appears to be the argument in which the enemies of the measure have triumphed as invincible, and which its friends have long beheld with an eye of despair, as be-

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yond the poſſibility of reduction. But I am by no means inclined to conſider the number of abſentees as likely to be increaſed, in that degree which is generally ſuppoſed, did an incorporation of the Legiſlatures take place. For it is far from neceſſary or probable, that the members returned to Parliament will be entirely ſelected from conſtant reſidents here. Some preſent abſentees, whoſe rank and fortune entitle them to the honor, will moſt probably poſſeſs influence ſufficient to be returned, particularly among the peerage; and thus the country, ſo far as they extend, will feel no greater diminution of the expenditure of fortune in the place from which it is derived, than what it laments at this moment. And of the remainder of our repreſentation it is by no means to be ſuppoſed, that they will ſpend, in conſequence of their attendance upon the Parliament in London, the whole of their time and eſtate in England. Can they be imagined, did they even poſſeſs the will, yet to have the power of acting ſo? Few accuſtomed to the eaſe and ſplendor of an extenſive eſtabliſhment, can reconcile themſelves to a retrenchment of their accuſtomed indulgences, (created by habit into a ſecond nature,) which the increaſed and enormous expence of reſiding on the other ſide, with a ſtation to ſupport, muſt unavoidably introduce. Therefore I conceive, after the gaiety and inordinate expence of a London winter, that they would be happy to embrace retreat and retrenchment in their Iriſh manſions. This probability is ſtrongly ſupported by the uniform practice of the power and opulence of Scotland; and I can diſcover no reaſon to authorize the ſuppoſition of leſs patriotiſm reſiding in the kingdom of Ireland.

I alſo

I alſo am convinced from obſervation, that, that money, ſo much dreaded as a deduction from this country to ſupport the Iriſh Parliament in the capital of the empire, is now ſpent by the fortune of this country at Harrigate, Margate, Buxton, Brighton, Bath and London. For Hibernian faſhion has ever laviſhed Hibernian income in this manner, at ſome ſeaſon of the year, to the utmoſt degree within their competence.

And what I now have urged, relative to the repreſenting rank and opulence of the nation, applies with ſtill with greater force to the inferior crowd, who may be liable to be drawn in and hurried off by the vortex of opinion and cuſtom, as their yet more unequal fortune, muſt more repreſs and curb their deſire of emigration, allowing even for the greater expence always attendant on the higher ſtation.

And I am well ſatisfied that, did all thoſe actually become abſentees, who have been ſuppoſed likely by the moſt exaggerated calculation; did all thoſe lean and miſerable public impoveriſhments, follow the ſpectres and ſhadows of the departed opulence and ſubſtance of the country, which have been ſeen by the viſionary eye of ſick and deſponding fancy paſſing in pale proceſſion; yet this country would be repaid, more than one hundred fold, for ſuch an expenditure, by a few, very few ſhort years of tranquillity and ſecurity, of increaſed commercial benefit, and conſequently, of increaſed induſtry, profit, and population, derivable from an Union.

But if in Dublin, Dublin is conſidered as the kingdom, and if that kingdom is ſilly enough to forget itſelf, and to yield the intereſt of the whole, to the overgrown intereſt of

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the part, by allowing its insolent and unjustifiable claim; if the capital by her is accounted the country, (*poetically* taking a part for the whole,) then indeed I shall allow that the number of absentees will be greater than at present. For then if I miss a constant resident in town, and enquire for him, I shall find him at his country seat, the father and *present* protector of his happy tenantry, no more the *distant* oppressor and unfeeling lord. And why? Because no longer the possessor of a seat in Parliament, which his fortune never entitled him to hold, but to which ambition and the example of his equals incited him to lift his desire, and consequently, because no longer straining to support a competition in the career of fashion to which his strength was not equal, and so fill a station for which his means were not sufficient, he feels no longer that craving for every penny which ceaseless and unsatisfied appetite inspires; and therefore no longer wrings from the wretched peasant the utmost exaction of a rigid due; removed from his presence and his pains in the capital, where, through the noise of dissipation, his cry could not reach the heart already hardened by ambition. This man is happily an absentee from Dublin.

If I miss the glittering equipage of a man, acquainted with my eye, but, then, a stranger to my heart, and enquire for its owner, I find him usefully and honourably to himself and to his country, improving his paternal acres, or adorning and expounding the laws, or enlarging and profiting by the commerce of his native land. And why? Because no longer the corrupt and venal, the gilded and emblazoned under-servant of an under court, his talents are no longer meanly mercenary,—as the Parliamentary mart is gone. Because the minister no longer requires his vote, he no longer perverts his

powers

powers for pay; no longer exerts that voice, and that understanding, to sap by corruption, which might support the state. Because his fortune now precludes the possibility of his serving in Parliament, his false hopes, and false desires, the diseases of the mind, pass off, and leave him fitted for more humble, but more honourable pursuits. Therefore his grandeur is happily an absentee from Dublin. These meteors are gone by. And I rejoice in the absence of their false splendour. They spoke a troubled air, and a distempered climate.

But the great object to be obtained by this country, as an inseparable and necessary consequence of an Union, (and the last that I shall insist upon,) an object that, did it stand single and unsupported by any other advantage, would fully establish the propriety of the measure, is the accomplishment of the great and principal end for which society was established—security. Yes, security from the destructive continuance of those wild and debilitating factions which have so long distracted and distressed our country, which have risen to the crisis of the fever, raged in the delirium of rebellion, and left the exhausted state, the feeble and inviting prey of foreign insult and invasion. But how shall we ensure ourselves this desirable possession, if incorporated? First, and generally, by removing the necessity from the ruler, (by the establishment of this strong and simple system in the room of that weak and complicated one under which we labour now,) of following the odious, though in some cases justifiable maxim, because indispensible, of "divide and govern;" for then that ruler would be exempted from such unlovely wisdom, by the cessation of the cause which recommended it with an imperative voice. As the mixture of the English, invited over by a firm and prudent establishment to

reap

reap the benefits of a large and luxuriant commerce, in a country peculiarly marked out by nature for its lord, would soften down the harsh distinctions of party, and blend the whole into one harmonious and benevolent mass. Bringing industry and wealth along with them, they would, by diffusing the former, employ that mind in useful works, which is now led by idleness to destructive designs; and, in consequence, by distributing the latter, would introduce that contentment which banishes far sedition, disorder, rapine and murder, the foul and infinite spawn of prolific penury.

For I cannot, like Mr. Goold, shut my eyes and my heart to the miseries of my poor countrymen; and to flatter national pride, imagine them (but too erroneously) rich and industrious. I cannot, like him, suppose industry possessed of that vital principle which springs up uncreated by any cause; nor can I conceive any cause which can call it forth, in a great degree, except increased capital; which necessarily embarks in commerce to enlarge itself, and to carry on that commerce must, as necessarily, employ and reward the industry of the poor. I cannot, like him, consider the agriculture of the country at its height, when millions of uncultivated acres, and undrained bogs, when wilds without tree or fence, when mud-built huts, and naked peasants every where speak the contrary, in large and melancholy characters: Nor can I, like him, conceive that agriculture not to require trade, and trade the most extensive, to improve and increase it: For who will cultivate land unless there is a demand for its produce? And what can make that demand except trade, which is to be furnished from the fruit of the soil?

But, that we may furnish ourselves with satisfaction the most complete, let us examine into those particular feelings, which, from long

avowed

avowed ſentiments and purſuits; we muſt preſume as actuating the particular political and religious parties, which have ſo long, and ſo ſucceſsfully marred the peace and mocked the happineſs of the country; and from the diſcovery of theſe feelings unanimouſly tending towards, or ſingly periſhing in an Union, we ſhall derive an argument the ſtrongeſt and the moſt convincing in ſupport of that ſecurity which I wiſh to eſtabliſh as the reſult of an Union.

What then are the wiſhes which have filled the breaſt of Preſbytery in this country, and for the completion of which ſhe has ſo long and ardently panted? Parliamentary Reform. And does ſhe, can ſhe hope to accompliſh this by remaining rivetted in the old ſyſtem, which has trenched itſelf againſt her aſſaults with ſuch determined oppoſition; or by wiſely ſeizing the preſent opportunity, afforded by an Union, of advancing in her project, by deſtroying at once, or greatly reducing, the borough intereſt, which is the marked object of her averſion and unrelenting hate; and by gaining at the ſame time that guarantee for the future fullneſs of reform, which England now poſſeſſes, and which Ireland now wants, (as without the example of the former, the latter could never hope to obtain it, and even then there exiſts no certainty of a province gaining a ſuppoſed advantage in an equal degree with the principal nation of the empire,) or by acting thus, I ſay, almoſt effectually accompliſh, on the inſtant, her great political deſign. If then we ſuppoſe the Preſbyterians of this kingdom to act conſiſtently with their paſt conduct, their preſent wiſhes, or their future hopes, we muſt conceive their ſentiments to be highly favourable to an Union; and therefore that its accompliſhment muſt furniſh us with a ſecurity againſt their future diſaffection or reſentment.

But what is the great object of Catholic endeavour, the poſſeſſion of which has long been its

firſt deſire? The privilege of ſitting in Parliament. Now can they prefer that ſyſtem, which, though it certainly, kindly and liberally, has granted them advantage once, beyond their hope, and ſcarcely within their ſight, yet has with firmneſs, and ſtrong reſolution, withheld from their graſp the fruit of all their induſtry and expectation; which has made it a principal, and indiſpenſible axiom of its ſcience of government, that Proteſtants alone, with ſafety to the ſtate, or life to the Conſtitution, can fill the Legiſlative benches. Can they, therefore, be ſuppoſed ſo wedded to that Parliament that they cannot ſuffer its alteration? or will they quit their fruitleſs anchorage there, and wiſely ſteer that middle courſe which leads to Union, as it may gratify their deſire in moderation, and without danger to the conſtitution? For then the Catholics, as their number never can, by any poſſibility, become the majority of the incorporated houſes, and therefore never can ſubvert the property of Ireland, or its eſtabliſhed church, may repreſent in Parliament; and upon no well-founded fear, no prudently proſpective ſelf-defence, can the firm and faithful band of Proteſtants, to whom I belong, oppoſe ſuch a qualified extenſion of privilege to their Catholic brother. Would not then the reſtleſs ſpirit of religious demand, provoked and irritated by political reſtraint, loſe its reſentment and agitation in the unruffled calm of ſweet and ſafe conciliation? Do we not thus diſcover a happy compoſition between Catholic and Proteſtant, which while it ſatisfies claim, diſarms oppoſition? And do we not thus furniſh ourſelves with the beſt ſecurity againſt the future diſcontents of the numerous adherents to the church of Rome, which have fed the flames with which our enemies have nearly conſumed the country.

I do

I do not aſſert that ſuch a conſequence muſt neceſſarily reſult from an Union, but there is a poſſibility, furniſhed by the meaſure, of ſatisfying Catholic demand with ſafety to the ſtate, which never can be provided by the old ſyſtem. For is it not clear that, when united, Proteſtants muſt be the majority of the empire, and therefore that the introduction of a few of the Catholics into power never can be deſtructive to the Proteſtant intereſt in Ireland; but that, when ſeparate, no principle of common prudence could permit the majority of Catholic number to become the majority of power in the ſtate, by any future poſſibility. Of the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity, under our preſent eſtabliſhment, of denying this poſſibility by repreſentation, to the Catholics, the firm and powerful Proteſtants of Ireland ſeem fully convinced; and the former, if capable of being inſtructed by the paſt, ſhould now more than ever forget the hope of accompliſhing their wiſhes. And if an Union were eſtabliſhed, and it allowed the Catholic his deſired privilege, or it did not, yet, in either caſe, we would poſſeſs a ſuperior ſecurity againſt his diſcontent, to what we hold at preſent; in the firſt evidently; and in the ſecond, becauſe, were the Catholics allowed to ſit in the incorporated houſes, their number muſt be ſmall indeed, therefore the advantage gained but ſmall, compared to what they might, and would derive from ſitting in the Houſes of Parliament in this country; and conſequently the regret and diſappointment at its being denied them muſt be leſs poignant and preying, than at the denial of it now; and particularly ſo as the apparent injuſtice, to them, would not be ſo irritating, when prohibited from repreſentation, as a ſmall part of the empire; as now, prohibited from repreſentation, as the majority of a kingdom.

But

But ſhall we not derive from an Union an additional ſecurity from the rage of that domeſtic faction, of the moſt dangerous nature, becauſe connected with, and relying upon, foreign influence and force. Let us examine what party in the ſtate has that diabolical tendency which it calls for our utmoſt vigilance and exertions—to counteract and defeat; not merely at the preſent but proſpectively; which imperiouſly demands ſacrifices, however large and dear, to purchaſe permanent ſecurity againſt its demoniac ſpirit—curbed but unbroken, ſuppreſſed but not deſtroyed, wild and unforgiving, calmly cruel, and deliberately deſolating. What but the Jacobins and adherents of the Iriſh Union? That dark and deep-laid faction, cloathed with all the myſteries of the infernals, whoſe averſion is order, the beautiful deſcendant of heaven, whoſe diſguſt is the happineſs of man, whoſe trade is treachery, and whoſe profit is woe—that would blot out virtue from the world, and ſtamp in its ſtead the image of univerſal vice—that would obliviate experience, and, "for the book of knowledge fair, preſent us with an univerſal blank:" That deteſted faction, whom conciliation cannot ſoothe, nor lenity diſarm; who ſpurn at mercy, becauſe they cannot ſuppoſe that divine quality to dwell in others, a conception of which their depraved imaginations cannot attain; whoſe health is the fever and deſirium of common men, whoſe duty is the corruption of the heart, and whoſe Religion is murder, becauſe their God is revenge; yea; that deteſted faction are the bound and ſolemnly obligated foes of all that we wiſh to preſerve: They may bend, but they will never abandon their

their hopes; they may omit the fortreſs and the field, but they never will leave the cloſet of conſpiracy; they will ſwear away loyalty, commit ſedition, and organize aſſaſſination; while they have our national jealouſies to work upon, our Parliament to afford matter of arraignment to one party, and our monopoly of repreſentation to furniſh reſentment, and invigorate diſcontent in the other, and our preſent precarious connection with England to provide an expectation of its diſſolution. But the adoption of an Union gives the death-blow to their hopes; becauſe, then (as I have ſhewn before) by gratifying the ruling deſires in part, or at leaſt removing our unqualified oppoſition to the whole of the great parties in the country, we remove that diſcontent which is the Jacobin's ſupport, and to which he owes all the blood which his malignity has ſucked from the heart of the ſtate; becauſe, then, we are indiſſolubly incorporated with England, too intimately mixed, too vitally connected, to leave him a hope the moſt romantic of the accompliſhment of his darling ſeparation. Nor can he then glow with the wicked expectation of final invaſion to aid and effectuate his ſcheme; for againſt a generally unanimous nation, it could never prevail, ſtrengthened and ſecured by England as an integral part of herſelf; no longer a plant, covered, (it is true) by the ſpreading branches of the oak, yet ſubject to be trampled down by the rude invader; but ſecurely grafted upon the ſtock of the empire, flouriſhing with its ſtrength and blooming with its life.

Thus will the Union furniſh us with the beſt ſecurity againſt the deadly machinations of our emboſomed viper, the Republican: Then, without

out means to forward, or hope to ſupport his plan, he muſt abandon it in deſpair; and reſtore, however reluctant, to his country her long abſent, and long deſired tranquillity. Thus wherever I turn my eyes, from whatever quarter I expect her coming, I behold the Union deſcending, like the ſpirit of peace, to heal the wounds, and calm the animoſities of a diſtracted nation.

But I know, (with ſorrow, and with indignation, I have diſcovered it) that the dignity of hiſtory has been inſulted, her candour tampered with, and her truth perverted, in order to overturn the probabilities, and to common ſenſe the certainties of ſecurity to this country, in the event of an Union. I know (from the inaccuracy, I am willing to ſuppoſe, which unfortunately attends upon heat and haſte, and an honeſt, tho' miſtaken zeal for the ſuppoſed intereſts of their country) that the *incorporative* Union of Scotland has been confounded with the Union of *the crowns*, in the reign of James the firſt of England. Elſe how are we to account for the poſition of Mr. Weld, that Mr. Hume, in the 6th vol. of his hiſt. of Eng. has aſſerted the Union to have cheriſhed, only, and increaſed the antient animoſities between the kingdoms. Now Mr. Hume evidently ſpeaks of the firſt, and *fœderal* Union, for he carries his hiſtory no farther than the revolution in 1688, and the *incorporative* Union with which we are concerned, (for the force of example) did not take place until the year 1707; and I refer you to the writer quoted, to diſcover that he deprecates the conſequences of that very fœderal Union of Scotland and England, which the anti-unionite recommends, and wiſhes to continue between Ireland and England.

Had Mr. Hume written upon the conſequences of the incorporative Union, he muſt, as an hiſtorian have recounted, and as a patriot have exulted in diſcovering, among them, amity and conciliation, and peace.

I know, my friend, that two rebellions in Scotland, ſubſequent to her incorporation, have been inſiſted upon as a denial of the ſecurity to be obtained by this country in the event of an Union; with what force and juſtice you ſhall now have an opportunity of judging. The firſt of theſe was a very partial rebellion, not in Scotland alone, but extended to, and originating in England, excited by the leaders of the Tories, who were exaſperated at the violent proceedings of the Whigs, in the commencement of the reign of George the 1ſt, when in the month of September, 1715, the Earl of Mar in Scotland, and of Derwentwater in England, took up arms againſt their Sovereign. Was this a rebellion, as it has been repreſented, peculiar to Scotland, and reſorted to by that nation as a remedy for its Union wrongs? And who oppoſed that inſurrection, and ſpread defeat and diſmay thro' its ranks? An army of Scots, led on by their premier noble, the renowned Argyle. And even on the appearance of their native Prince, the unhappy Chevalier de St. George, whoſe abaſed ſituation called for compaſſion from the moſt unfeeling, becauſe his misfortunes were the crimes of his anceſtors, the Scots, however ſtimulated by his preſence or the artifices of party, ſenſible of the many advantages they enjoyed, and of their improved ſituation ſince the Union, ſuffered him to depart unhonored and unſupported*.

The

* Belſham's Mem. George the Iſt.

The next the rebellion in 1745, was a proof, (if we are to credit the Anti-Unionite,) that this country is not to expect ſecurity from an Union. What was the cauſe of that rebellion, or more properly invaſion of England, through Scotland, by France? I ſhall tell you. The French court during the triumphs of Martial Saxe upon the continent, in order to effect a diverſion of the Engliſh force in Flanders, equipped the Pretender, furniſhed him with troops, and ſent him to invade Great Britain, in the abſence of its ſovereign in Hanover, and almoſt deſtitute of internal defence. † Was this an inſurrection, as repreſented, ſpringing up in the torn and agitated heart of Scotland, provoked by injury, and harraſſed out by wrong? And did the event juſtify in the leaſt degree a ſuppoſition ſo invidious? Did the inſtant and active loyalty of the great and powerful clans; the Campbells, the Monroes, and the Macdonalds; did the ſullen acquieſcence of Edinburgh, in ſuperior power, juſtify the ſuppoſition? Did the rigid exaction of the heavieſt contributions from Glaſgow, on the return of the Pretender from the invaſion of England, for the determined and conſtant, though expoſed and ſuffering loyalty of that city to the Hanoverian houſe, juſtify the ſuppoſition? or do theſe broad and prominent facts ſpeak out the benefits of the Union, to the Scot, which could hold ſteady his attachment to that ſyſtem of polity under every temptation of ſucceſsful invaſion, led on by a prince whoſe misfortunes might win his compaſſion, whoſe enterprize might command his admiration, and whoſe kindred deſcent might gain his affection? Let oppoſition then,

† Belſhams Mem. George II.

then, baffled in every mean attempt to diſtort the plainneſs and ſimplicity of fact, to diſcolour the complexion, and poiſon the ſalubrity of hiſtory—the fountain of truth, give over its abſurd, and wicked efforts; for I ſpeak it with a confidence, that certainty can alone inſpire, that every record writes, and every Scot declares the benefits of an Union to the North of Britain. And there can be no diſtinction drawn between the fate of Scotland and the probable fate of Ireland, in the event of a final incorporation, than what the difference between a ſtream of ſea and a river, between the waters of the Channel and the Tweed, can conſtitute. And from the examination, which I have now concluded, I feel ſtrong in the aſſertion that there is, that there can be no ſecurity for Ireland but in an Union.

Such, my friend, is the neceſſity which commands, the practicability which recommends, and ſuch the conſequences which invite Ireland to—an Union. And if ever Ireland ſhould be induced to become one with England it is now; when ſeated on the ſummit of ſucceſs, encircled with the pureſt beams of glory; now, when the generous and triumphant aſſertor of the rights of injured and inſulted mankind, the citadel of their independence, and the pillar of their honour, their virtue, and their reaſon; it is now when the ſalvator of Ireland from the ruthleſs deſolation of a devouring enemy, and the peſtilent contagion of their polluting manners, ſhe waves us to her boſom: Let us then no longer heſitate to adopt that ſyſtem of policy which owes its birth to the wiſe, the patriot, and heroic William; which was the peculiar darling of his affection; which he recommended with his parting breath to his now united

united kingdoms; and wiſhed Ireland, when prepared by time, to have received, as the firmeſt companion and beſt ſupport of that common conſtitution which he created, which he cheriſhed in his heart, for which he hazarded his life, and which he would have yielded that life with pleaſure, to defend. Yes, the magnanimous William beheld, with that prudence and foreſight, which ſo pre-eminently diſtinguiſhed his policy, incorporation, as the only ſure and laſting cement of the empire: becauſe the only origin of that unanimity which is the ſoul of ſecurity and happineſs—the great and genuine ends of ſociety. Let us then offer to his manes a becoming ſacrifice, our pride and prejudice; and at the altar, imbibing the ſpirit of his policy, render it by our actions as ſplendid and immortal as his memory. Let us abandon our long beloved error, our long cheriſhed folly. Let us embrace and be happy. Farewell.

Dublin,
January 18, 1799.

15 NO 62